

# CURCUMAS (GINGERS) STARTING DORMANCY



*Curcuma petiolate variegata* 'Emperor'

## BY CEIL DOW

*Mercer Botanic Gardens ginger grower*

As October nears its end, some gingers like Curcumas (Hidden Gingers), Kaempferias (Peacock Gingers), Globbas (Dancing Ladies) and Zingibers (Pinecone gingers) are falling into dormancy. This means that they literally go to sleep in the winter and wake up in late spring.



*L to r, Kaempferias (Peacock Gingers), Globbas (Dancing Ladies) and Zingibers (Pinecone gingers)*

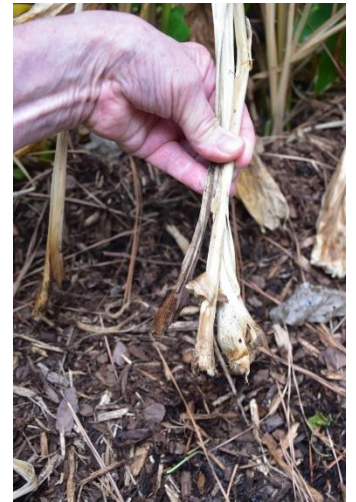


As gingers go to sleep, they drain the energy from their leaves, and store it in their rhizome for next year's blooms. As the energy is drained, it causes the leaves to turn yellow, fall down and generally look messy in the garden.

It is so tempting to cut the weeping stalks to the ground. However, if leaf stalks are cut too soon the gingers will not have the energy to bloom well the following year.

Instead, wait a week or two and the leaves can be removed by gently tugging on the stem. If the stem does not pull away easily from the rhizome, wait another few days and try again.

I only lift gingers/Costus if they are not hardy to our area. We actually leave half of the plant in the ground and the other half we place in the Ginger house. This way we see if they are cold hardy and if they are not, we have the plant safe in our heated Ginger house.



Hopefully, gardeners will have mulched in the spring and this is usually sufficient. In last year's cold snap, we laid down an extra layer of pine straw to help insulate them. This worked extremely well.

FOR MORE GINGER-GROWING ADVICE FROM CEIL DOW:  
WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF GINGERS by CEIL DOW:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNfX45Y3iYw>